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New study ranks Omaha 4th nationally in volunteerism

Omaha, Nebraska—Omaha ranks 4th in its rate of volunteerism according to a study of major metropolitan areas in the United States. Omahans volunteered at a rate of 37.8% – nearly 10% higher than the national average – according to *Volunteering in America: 2007 City Trends and Rankings*, released today by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

"The generous nature of our citizens and their demonstrated commitment to supporting our community is no surprise," said Omaha Mayor Mike Fahey. "Omahans are known for their willingness to lend a helping hand and it is just another example of what makes Omaha great."

The report is the first of its kind to look at volunteering trends in the 50 largest metropolitan areas in the United States. In addition Omaha ranking 4th in its rate of volunteerism, Omaha also ranked 12th in the number of volunteer hours per resident, at 43.6.

"We're proud to support our national service partner programs in Omaha – AmeriCorps and Citizen Corps," said Barbara Wilson Thomas, Executive Director of the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission. "No doubt these programs working to build communities, engaging youth and preparing citizens for emergencies have contributed greatly to Omaha's elite status."

The report also lists several points that elaborate on how Omaha accomplished its top tier ranking. Included in the summary is the fact that Omaha had the shortest average commuting length (19.6 minutes) of all 50 cities studied for the report, and a low population density that allows for a higher level of community attachment. The report also refers to a prevalence of nonprofits and their ability to retain volunteers, which also affect a community's volunteer rate.

Much of Omaha's volunteerism efforts relate to religious activity, education and youth services, according to the study. Omaha's major volunteer activities include fundraising, food distribution, professional assistance and general labor.

Volunteering in America: 2007 City Trends and Rankings follows a similar 2007 study about states' volunteerism habits called *Volunteering in America: State Trends and Rankings in Civic Life*. Nebraskans also sit near the top in several state-based volunteerism categories, including 2nd in overall rate. In 2006, 42.4% of Nebraska residents volunteered.

For more information about volunteering in Omaha, or throughout Nebraska, contact the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission. To view the full *Volunteering in America: City Trends and Rankings* report, please visit www.nationalservice.org.

The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission is responsible for support and oversight of (1) Nebraska's AmeriCorps*State national service program; (2) the Citizen Corps State national disaster preparedness service program; (3) Disability Preparedness efforts for individuals and organizations throughout the state; (4) statewide volunteer recognition through the Governor's Points of Light Awards and First Lady's Awards for Outstanding Community Service; and (5) the annual Governor's Conference on Community Service for community, education, elected, volunteer and corporate leaders.

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